

Message Text

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62

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-12 ADP-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-03 USIA-12

PRS-01 RSR-01 /084 W
----- 056005

R 121835 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7197

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

USMISSION GENEVA

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E. O.11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, BE

SUBJECT: - LABOR- TROUBLE AT CATERPILLAR EASES

REF: BRUSSELS 1968, BRUSSELS A-87

1. FOLLOWING TALKS WITH PRIME MINISTER LEBURTON AND INTERVENTION OF LABOR MINISTER GLINEE, TRADE UNION LEADERS AT CATERPILLAR AGREED, OVER OBJECTION OF HARD CORE AGITATORS, TO COMPROMISE IN WHICH SEVEN DISCHARGED WORKERS RETURNED IMMEDIATELY TO WORK AND DISCHARGE OF THREE OTHERS WAS SUSPENDED PENDING RULING BY JOINT LABOR COMMISSION. STRIKERS RETURNED TO WORK FOR THREE WEEKS WHILE UNRESOLVED CONTRACT ISSUES OF SOCIAL AND WORKING CONDITIONS RECEIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION. SYMPATHY ACTIONS ALSO ENDED.

2. COMMENT: CATERPILLAR STRIKE DIVIDED PRESS AS THOROUGHLY AS IT DID CATERPILLAR'S BLUE COLLAR FROM ITS WHITE COLLAR WORKERS, PRO- LABOR PAPERS AND COMMENTATORS COMPLAINING OF "PATRONIZATION" OF WORKERS AND ALLEGED FAILURE OF CATERPILLAR TO OPERATE WITHIN BELGIAN SYSTEM OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS WHILE OTHERS FAULTED WORKERS AND UNIONS FOR FAILURE TO ADJUST TO TIMES.
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REPUTATION OF LABOR MINISTER GLINNE WAS ENHANCED BY HIS INTERVENTION, WHICH INCLUDED SOME STRONG WORDS TO WORKERS OF HIS HOME DISTRICT WHERE CATERPILLAR PLANT IS LOCATED, BUT WHICH NEVERTHELESS LEFT TRADE UNION LEADERS IMPRESSED WITH HIS KNOWLEDGE, FAIRNESS, AND INTEGRITY. PRESIDENT LOUIS CAMU OF BANQUE DE BRUXELLES, WHICH PROVIDES FINANCIAL SERVICES FOR CATERPILLAR, TOLD THE AMBASSADOR HOWEVER, THAT LEBURTON'S PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT (IF NOT GLINNE'S OWN FIRM POSITION) WAS AT CAMU'S EXPLICIT REQUEST. STRAUSS- HUPE

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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